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LIBRARY

SOUTH AFRICAN LIBRARIES

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SOUTH AFRICAN LIBRARIES

The Official Organ of the South African Library Association

Volume 27

April 1960

No. 4

LIBRARY THOUGHTS ON THE UNION FESTIVAL

DURING the month of May, 1960 South Africans throughout the world will be commemorating the 50th anniversary of Union — some with natural pride in past achievement, others, in more reflective mood, with humility for mistakes made and tasks yet unaccomplished.

In the world of libraries we can undoubtedly look with pride at the achievements of the past half-century. In our comparatively small, multi-racial community there has been, during those years, a statistical transformation scene. Thus in 1910 the total expenditure on all kinds of libraries in South Africa was in the nature of £45,000. In 1960 the total annual expenditure on public libraries alone in the Cape Province is estimated at £1 million. Even after making allowance for the devaluation of the pound sterling, these figures give cause for much thought. And the story is much the same, if less astronomical, in almost every branch of library work — with the serious exception, perhaps, of libraries of true research.

Yet in celebrating this remarkable progress, it is worth while turning back the pages of library history to the inaugural address delivered at the first Conference of South African librarians, on 5 April, 1903, at a meeting held in Johannesburg under the auspices of the Association for the Advancement of Science. In this address⁽¹⁾ Mr. Justice Laurence (as he then was), a quarter-century ahead of his time, called for the formation of a professional Library Association in South Africa, in spite of "the great distances which in this country separate the principal centres of population", "with a view to bringing the various librarians and their representatives into closer contact with one another, to facilitate co-operation and diminish that feeling of isolation which under present conditions must often prove discouraging".

Among the objects of such an Association would be the publication of a library journal (not achieved until 1930), the encouragement of inter-library co-operation, the compilation of "an exhaustive catalogue of works relating to South Africa"⁽²⁾, and the training of librarians. In the latter connection, Sir Perceval Laurence shrewdly observed that "what we want in our libraries is a combination of wide literary knowledge with practical training, businesslike habits and a good deal of what has been described as flexibility of adaptation". There have been many definitions of a librarian since then, but few of them so concise and to the point.⁽³⁾

Looking back from our more privileged position — and looking forward as well, there would seem to be two main dangers for South African librarians still to contend with.

The first is: a failure to achieve the maximum of professional co-operation, through pre-occupation with our own institutional problems and difficulties. Such pre-occupation is natural enough when libraries are in the initial stages of their development.

(1) Printed in the Association's *Report* for 1904, pp. 526—37.

(2) Achieved by Sidney Mendelsohn in his *South African bibliography*, 1910. This is now (1960) to be supplemented by the South African Public Library in collaboration with other Africana libraries in the Union, through a welcome grant from the National Council for Social Research. See p. 108 below.

(3) Appealing for the happy mean, Laurence quotes the Chairman of an important institution as follows: "I can't get my librarian to take any interest in incunabula; his mind is engrossed by the question of umbrella stands".

It may be an indication that they are at least out of long clothes that this reluctance to co-operate is being steadily overcome. This has been demonstrated recently by the response of many librarians throughout the country to the questionnaires and enquiries of the Action Committee on Library Co-operation set up by our Association at its Potchefstroom Conference last year. Perhaps it is only human, though regrettable, that the stimulus to co-operate should have been the threat of "co-ordination" — nevertheless, the will to co-operate is there, and as a colleague has recently put it: "Co-operation assumes a high degree of professional integrity — without this basic characteristic we merely destroy our own profession, let alone deriving any advantages from technological advancements."

The other danger is equally real: the tendency throughout South Africa to-day to over-centralize what has been built up locally over many years as the result of in-

dividual sacrifice and effort. In the commercial sphere, cartels and amalgamations may be the order of the day; in libraries, which are essentially living organisms, dependent to an extraordinary degree on human knowledge, human skill and human relationships, these devices are alien and may be self-destructive. They should be considered with the utmost caution, and with a deep consideration of the intangibles involved.

There are some who think that Union was a mistake, and that a looser form of association between the four Colonies would have brought less tension and greater happiness. But Union is an accomplished fact, and it now remains for librarians, while seeking the maximum amount of co-operation with each other, to be on their guard against a rigidity and concentration of power and authority which may, in the end, bring to naught the achievements of the past fifty years.

ELIZABETH TAYLOR

REVISION OF "MENDELSSOHN"

A grant of £8,000 over a period of three years has been made by the National Council of Social Research to the South African Public Library, Cape Town, for the revision and supplementing of Sidney Mendelssohn's *South African Bibliography*, published in 1910. The project will be under the direction of the Chief Librarian of the S.A. Library, Mr. D. H. Varley, and will be carried out in close co-operation with the Library of Parliament and the University of Cape Town, and it is hoped, with all other libraries in the country with substantial Africana collections. Although Mendelssohn, as it is familiarly known, is by far the most complete printed record of publications in and about Southern Africa, it is well known that many thousands of items not known to Mendelssohn were omitted from the Bibliography, and many thousands still have been added to Africana libraries since 1910, when this standard work was published. It is hoped to fill many of these earlier gaps, and to take the supplement to 1925; after this date the published bibliographical sources are more numerous, and are easier to handle and locate.

It is intended to use the printed Mendelssohn as a base, to be photographed on to cards or slips, and to check these in the

first place against the extensive holdings of the South African Library and its various collections. "New" titles will be extracted and the cards photographed, and the process will be continued with the Mendelssohn and Parliamentary Collections across the Avenue. When the basic union list has been completed, it will be transported, together with a photographic unit, to the main Africana libraries in other parts of the country, by which time it is expected that the number of "new" titles will have diminished proportionately. It is known, however, that there are unique items in almost every collection of any size, and it is hoped to pick these up "on circuit". In the meantime full editing of the entries will be in progress, and the project will be brought to the point at which a decision on the form of publication will have to be made. The grant made by the Council in the first instance does not, of course, include publication costs.

The whole project presents many problems and difficulties, but also a bibliographical challenge of a high order. It has the assured approval of the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Assembly, and represents the fulfilment of plans made, but never brought to fruition, as long ago as 1937.

THE LIBRARY OF MAKERERE COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF EAST AFRICA

by

HAROLD HOLDSWORTH

THE STORY of the building of Makerere College Library can differ but little from that of the building of any other College Library. It was, like most buildings, a compromise in the end. There were certain unchangeable conditions, like a grant which could not be increased, and a site which could not be moved. Not that we wanted to move the latter; but we would have liked to increase the former.

The building cost £140,000. With such a sum it was apparent from the start that one could contemplate only the nucleus, the first stage, of what would ultimately become a much larger building. It would nevertheless have to cater for all the services expected in a University Library, albeit some of them in a very restricted way, but would have to be designed in such a way as to allow these services to expand naturally, without involving unnecessary reconstruction.

We already had over 50,000 volumes, and a student body of 750. Our calculation was that all things considered we would get space for 250 readers and 120,000 volumes, if we included our growing bindery, and our offset printing and photographic sections. With an expected accelerated rate of growth we would obviously not last very long, and we pinned our hopes on a further Colonial Development and Welfare grant for an extension by the end of 1965 at the latest.

The cost, as stated above, was £140,000. Many materials had to be imported: windows and window-frames; steel; high quality cement; roofing felts; ceramic screens; steel shelving; cork tiles; acoustic tiles; most hardware, and lighting, and sanitary fittings. These account for a considerable outlay on freight and insurance. As far as one dared it was worth getting best quality materials. In the long run they effect savings in maintenance costs; and no capital development project in East Africa can be considered without serious consideration of

future expense involved. It also seemed to us that, in a country without examples of modern libraries, we should set the standard as high as possible, and this led us to stress quality even at the cost of a reduction in the size of the building.

THE SITE

The site is an attractive and a prominent one in the central area of the College ground on the top of Makerere Hill. The positions of existing buildings within this area made it unavoidable that the library should lie parallel to them, although the ideal east-west position, which deviates some forty-five degrees from the position chosen, would have given better protection from the sun. The rectangular shape of the building resulted from a number of considerations, prominent among which are the following. It was thought that about 33,000 square feet could be afforded. Three storeys were a permissible height; a higher building would obscure the extensive views from the neighbouring buildings over an adjacent valley. This building was to be a nucleus from which future extensions would extend, and should therefore be as compact as possible. The general tendency in East Africa is to build narrowly to get cross ventilation; and 82 feet seemed as wide as one dare make a building and still comply with local building regulations about cross breezes and light. A three storey building 82 feet wide fixed the length (140 feet). These dimensions give a reasonable undergraduate library; the development of research collections and facilities would be possible at a second stage of building, and it was anticipated that this would take the form of an additional linked block, while extra modules could be added to the length of the undergraduate library when this became necessary. Nothing, therefore, should be done to prejudice future extensions, and interior design should allow first arrangements to be tentative, and changeable at will.

A MODULAR BUILDING

We tried to create a modular building. Modular is not necessarily synonymous with flexibility in a building which is small; but a structure which offers clear space beyond the columns is flexible by contrast with one which is carved into a large number of rooms with fixed walls. The smaller the building the less flexible it is likely to be, for there is always an uncomfortable minimum of fixtures and immovable services. The largest module we could afford, taking into account the desired heights of ceilings, thicknesses of columns and beams, and cost of spanning, was 24 feet by 14 feet, 24 feet across the width of the building, 14 feet along the length, reckoning on centres.

This resulted in a building three modules wide (72 feet, plus two shade verandahs each 5 feet, making a total width of 82 feet) and ten modules long (140 feet). Of the three levels, the upper two carry verandahs on each of their long sides. Internal walls were omitted when not essential, and, when included, were constructed as movable screens if possible. Even so, when one has included fixtures such as stairs, lift, lavatories, ducts, an internal court, and a catalogue hall (a two-storey well) within the small area of approximately 11,000 feet on a floor, flexibility is considerably reduced, and one is left with some clear areas which are themselves too small to be self-contained units for growing sections or services of the library. Within the remaining free areas we accepted flooring reinforced to take stacks at any point, and uniform flooring (wooden block on the first level, and cork tiles on the second and third levels) and uniform lighting (flush fluorescent fittings) to permit interchange of reading and stacking areas should this prove desirable.

READING AREAS

The general principle followed for internal circulation was that readers should be able to circulate through the interior of the building and pass through stacks to reach tables reasonably secluded around the perimeter and against the windows. Readers would thus be given light and air, and stacks would be set back sufficiently to escape direct sun and excessive light, and yet, with their end panels facing the windows, would allow light to pass between them. We have

found that readers around the perimeter are more or less cut off from movement and sound in the interior of the building, on the stairs, and in the catalogue area; and that they themselves are obscured by the stacks. There is no large formal reading room; the largest reading area comprises about two and a half modules. Reading areas are created by the omission of stacks (or vice versa). We have noted that the largest area is usually the last to be occupied, although it lies nearest to the entrance and adjacent to an attractive internal court garden. There is no doubt, however, that with the growth in the number of students and in the use of reserved books there will be need of a larger undergraduate reading area with reserved book stacks and issue desk adjacent.

It is essentially an undergraduate library, mainly open access. There are no large special collection rooms. Almost everything is as it were, in the shop window, and one section follows another along the sequence of shelves, with divisions made evident by ample shelf guides. While most features of a University Library are represented, many are necessarily represented in miniature. Accommodation for microfilm reading, for government documents, and special collections will soon be inadequate, as will space for research workers and academic staff. This state of affairs can only be remedied by an addition to the building; it is hoped that then the present library will become in effect an undergraduate library, and that research collections and facilities will be segregated in the extension. Extension to the undergraduate library can be made by adding modules to the length.

EXTERNAL FEATURES

The external appearance of the building is largely the result of climatic conditions. In order to allow light and air to penetrate the building, while excluding direct sun and glare, and to protect the windows so that they can remain open during light and moderate rains, verandahs giving overhangs five feet wide were added to the long sides of the two upper levels, screened on the outside with glazed ceramic tile anti-sun grilles. This screening permitted the installation of continuous floor-to-ceiling windows along these longer sides of the upper two

levels to compensate for the loss of natural light caused by screens and verandah overhangs. White glazed ceramic tiles were chosen for screens because they reflect light, and have a reasonably permanent reflecting surface. External finishes are as far as possible "natural", requiring little maintenance: glass, stone, stone aggregate slabs, glazed ceramic tiles. Exposed concrete and paintwork were kept to a minimum and there is indeed not much of them. There are no external drainage pipes, water being led off the roof by gargoyles, two at each end.

INTERIOR DECORATION

Internally, particular attention was paid to light reflection, sound-proofing, ease of maintenance, and, within reason, comfort. The few walls there are, are painted the palest grey; all columns and ceilings, all end-panels of shelves (otherwise dark grey), all doors, and all metal paintwork (except balustrades which are black) are white. Light is also filtered through three plastic roof lights on the catalogue area, which is a two-storey well, and through the fully glazed walls of an internal court garden 28' x 24'. This latter is on the second level, and extends upward to the open sky, while letting light into the level below it by means of three clusters of circular translucent glass panels set in the floor. Sound-proofing materials chosen were cork tiles for the two upper floors; wooden blocks for the bottom floor; acoustic ceiling tiles for reading, public and work areas, but not over the stacks; hollow wooden doors with infilling of sound-proof-material; and acoustic tiles for carrel screens. Maintenance was eased by using washable paints, and by applying a plastic sealer to cork and wooden floors and all unpainted woodwork. The finishes to furniture are "permanent" in that the frames are metal, stove-enamelled dark grey or black, the woodwork is bonded and sealed plywood, and the upholstery washable synthetic material. For comfort easy chairs and many single tables are provided. Curtains soften somewhat the institutional atmos-

sphere, and are necessary for a short period each day during six months of the year when low evening and morning sun penetrate the sun-screens.

CEILING-HEIGHT ECONOMIES

Ceilings are lower than is usual in Uganda. The distance from floor to beam is 7 ft. 9 ins.; from floor to ceiling 9 ft. 3 ins. Ventilation has nevertheless proved to be adequate, and so has light, thanks to the fully glazed walls and reflecting sun-screens, and to a flat but excellently insulated roof. Unnecessary space over stacks seems to have been avoided, and we have been enabled to use flush fluorescent ceiling lights instead of pendants, giving a tidier and more efficient lighting arrangement.

Shelves are of steel, a perforated type being used in the public stacks, an open-bracket type in the workrooms. It is now our opinion that the less expensive open-bracket shelves would have been not only adequate but equally admirable if used throughout, since they are more easily adjusted, and permit the use of different widths of shelves on the same uprights.

We have always thought that a small building can gain much in appearance and atmosphere by the careful use of wells (functional wells) two storeys high, or one storey and a mezzanine high. We would use them, not as is commonly done to create large and too lofty reading rooms with long mezzanine galleries, but in a smaller way to give a sense of spaciousness to what would otherwise be restricted areas, to create "rooms" bounded by stacks and balustrades instead of walls. This is very desirable in the tropics where openness improves ventilation and comfort. Given these ventilation pockets and a reasonably unobstructed internal design, ceilings can in general be unexpectedly low and a building economical in cubic volume.

The library houses a library staff of 40, including those employed in "service" units such as the bindery, 250—270 readers, and 120,000 volumes.

(For illustrations and plans of this Library, see p. 122 below)

DIE TRANSVAALSE PROVINSIALE BIBLIOTEEKDIENS VYFTIEN JAAR

deur

H. M. ROBINSON

*Direkteur, Transvaalse Provinciale
Biblioteekdiens*

DIT WAS MY VOORREG om in Desember 1944 die eerste boeke van die Transvaalse Provinciale Biblioteekdiens uit te reik ter aanvulling van die voorrade van die openbare biblioteke van Witbank, Middelburg en Lydenburg. Daar is seker min dinge in die wêreld waarvoor ek die opwinding en inspirasie van daardie eerste dae van ons diens sou wil verruil. Veel meer belangrik is dit egter vir my om in alle opregtheid te kan verklaar dat die storie van die Transvaalse Provinciale Biblioteek — dat die oogmerke en ideale van die diens, my verbeelding vandag nog net so aangryp as in 1944 toe ek vir die eerste keer daarmee kennis gemaak het. Dikwels vra 'n mens jou af wat dit dan in werklikheid is wat jou so aangryp en vasgryp? In die eerste jare was dit seker die nuwigheid van elke gebeurtenis en die vaste geloof dat jy die eerste stene lê van 'n wolkekrabber wat spoedig voltooi sal wees want alles was „die eerste in Afrika en van die eerste in die Suidelike Halfrond!“ En vandag? Vandag is dit seker die besef wat met die jare gekom het dat die verwesenliking van ons ideale soveel oneindig moeiliker is as wat ons aanvanklik gemeen het.

Provinciale Biblioteekdienste moet hulle bestaan in die eerste instansie daarin regverdig dat hulle plattelandse gemeenskappe in staat stel om 'n volwaardige openbare biblioteekdiens aan die gang te hou en dat hulle dit op ekonomiese grondslag moet doen. As 'n mens hulle sukses wou meet, moet jy bepaal in hoeverre hulle met verloop van jare daarin kon slaag om op landswye grondslag so 'n „volwaardige openbare biblioteekdiens“ te verwesenlik. Ongelukkig moet 'n mens nog veel verder terug gaan. Jy kan nie sommer aanvaar dat 'n „volwaardige openbare biblioteekdiens“ op die platteland geregtig is nie. Sedert die vroegste jare van die diens was daar

talle invloedryke persone wat bv. gevoel het dat „mense wat werk, nie tyd het om boeke te lees nie.“ Ander het weer gevoel dat veels te veel geriewe gratis vir die heden-daagse mens beskikbaar gestel word. Talle vooroordele moes oorwin word.

Met groot dankbaarheid kan ons egter sê dat die diens sy waarde bewys het op die Transvaalse platteland; dat ons ons daar nie meer besig hou om mense te oortuig van die wenslikheid van 'n openbare biblioteekdiens nie maar dat ons slegs voortdurend moet kopkrap oor hoe om hom daar te stel en in stand te hou.

Hierin lê vir my dan ook ons belangrikste sukses: dat die noodsaaklikheid van die openbare biblioteek selfs in die kleinste plattelandse gemeenskap vandag in Transvaal feitlik sonder uitsondering en bo enige twyfel besef en aanvaar word.

FRUSTRASIES EN PROBLEME

Min het ons egter besef hoe uiters moeilik die verwesenliking van 'n volwaardige openbare biblioteekdiens op die platteland in werklikheid sou wees.

Ek wonder dikwels of daar êrens ter wêreld 'n arbeidsveld is waar 'n mens se frustrasies en probleme so nou verstrengel is met jou grootste bevrediging en vreugde. In tye van spanning voel 'n mens soms as die Provincie tog net nie so ontsettend groot was nie; as daar tog net 'n bietjie minder as 110,000 vierkante myl was waарoor jou probleme gesaai gelê het. Maar dan kom tog weer die bevrediging as die een spikkeltjie na die ander op jou kaart ontstaan en jy weet dat daar in elkeen van daardie talle gemeenskappe tog die heilsame wisselwerking plaasvind tussen leser en boek. Dikwels betreur jy die feit dat daar so min, so uiters min lede van jou personeel is wat die taak korrek sien en benader en in jou wildste verbeelding sien jy wat daar verrig sou

kon word deur 'n span van sewe honderd opgeleide, besielde bibliotekarisse van die regte temperament en kaliber — en al die bykomstige vereistes en kwalifikasies. Maar net mōre bring die pos 'n brief van die bibliotekaresse van 'n klein plattelandse dorpie, wat nie opgelei is nie en wat skaars vir haar werk besoldig word, maar tog met weinig pretensie 'n voorstel doen wat duidelik laat blyk dat sy presies weet waarom dit gaan en dat sy hard besig is om die taak na die beste van haar vermoë uit te voer — en hoe verrassend groot is daardie vermoë nie dikwels nie. Soms weer het ek al gewonder of ons nie veel meer sou bereik het as die Provincie die volle verantwoordelikheid vir die hele bibliotekdiens aanvaar het nie. Dan kon ons self die geboue ooprig, die personeel huur en die hele diens beoorlik beheer het. Maar dan weer kom 'n jong en behoeftige gemeenskap en ondernem om vir sy biblioteek soveel opofferinge te doen dat 'n mens se hart vir maande daarna nog sulke warm opslae maak — en weet jy dadelik dat dit reg is so: dat die vordering stadiger sal wees en dat dit oneindig moeiliker sal wees maar dat die plaaslike gemeenskap op die lange duur tog trots sal wees op hulle biblioteek op 'n ander manier as die waarop hulle trots is op hulle poskantoor. En dan die ewige sonde met en oor die boeke!

BOEKVOORSIENING

Vyftien jaar gelede het die voorraad op die kaal rakke van die streekbiblioteek na elke besending boeke uit die Sentrale Organisasie met drie of vier aangewas. Wat 'n keuse was daar vir die arme geesdriftige depotbibliotekaris wat op 'n Saterdagoggend die Streekbiblioteek kom besoek om meer boeke te kry want sy lesertal groei so aan! En hoe salig was die droom van die skaam streekbibliotekaris wat gedink het: wag maar as al die mense in die Transvaal eers by die biblioteek aangesluit het en ons het 'n miljoen boeke . . . In die waarheid staan albei nog steeds bedroë want op die gebied van boekvoorsiening gebeur daar in die Provinciale Biblioteek werklik die fantasiese. Daar is nooit genoeg boeke nie. Die streekbibliotekarisse en depotbibliotekarisse en lesers is nooit tevrede nie. Hoe groter en beter die voorraad boeke, hoe groter en

beter word die gebruik en hoe erger word die ontevredenheid. En onbeperkte boekfondse (as so iets ooit denkbaar sou wees) bied op hierdie probleem seker nie die antwoord nie. En van fondse gepraat: 'n bibliotekdiens is noodwendig 'n duur diens. Veral kleiner munisipaliteite vind dit uiters moeilik om iedere jaar werklik in die behoeftes van 'n groeiende biblioteek te voldoen: daar moet eenvoudig strate geteer word en water aangelê word en ligte verskaf word, en as die biblioteekkamer nou op die verkeerde tydstip ook nog te klein word, vereis dit darem werklik koue realisme om die pot so goed moontlik aan die kook te hou.

DANKBAARHEID

In werklikheid worstel die Transvaalse Provinciale Biblioteek dus eintlik met die selfde probleme as vyftien jaar gelede, hoewel sommige van hulle vandag nuwe gedaaentes aanneem. Wat het ons dan eintlik bereik? Met dankbaarheid en beskeidenheid kan ons beweer dat die idee van die vrye openbare biblioteek in Transvaal werklik posgevat het. Met nog groter dankbaarheid kan ons beweer dat die Transvaalse Provinciale Biblioteek jarelang reeds vir die plattelandse bevolking van die provinsie 'n boekvoorraad toeganklik maak wat in gehalte goed vergelyk met dié van die beste openbare biblioteke in die wêreld.

Met die grootste dankbaarheid kan ons beweer dat hierdie boeke sedert 1944 altezaam reeds 27,540,000 keer gelees is en dat ons geleidelik kan begin praat van die vestiging van die leesgewoonte in die Provincie, waar die biblioteek nie meer net 'n plek is waar 'n mens 'n boek kan kry om te lees wanneer jy niks beter het om te doen nie.

In 1958 is daar trouens 41,743 boeke op spesiale aanvraag aan lesers voorsien. Dit was 'n besondere voorreg om op 'n aantal plekke in Transvaal te help met die daarstelling en opbou van openbare bibliotekdienste waarop ons baie trots voel.

In sy wese is die Transvaalse Provinciale Biblioteek egter nog een van wat onlangs met 'n mate van minagtig deur 'n kollega bestempel is as die „newer systems". Dis die innige begeerte van dié wat hom liefhet dat die Transvaalse Provinciale Biblioteek in gees, in besieling en in lewenskragtigheid altyd een van die „newest systems" sal bly!

THE PLANNING OF LIBRARY MATERIAL FOR USE FROM THE ORGANIZATIONAL POINT OF VIEW⁽¹⁾

by

THEO FRIIS

Director of Library Services, Cape Province

II

THERE IS a demonstrable need for co-operative action to organize our library material in South Africa for use, especially for research purposes, and for more serious reading.

The libraries of every country should have close connections with each other to form a planned network of library services. South Africa lacks a co-ordinated library system. Although the four provincial library systems co-ordinate the majority (97.5%)⁽²⁾ of public library services, the school libraries, Union Government departmental libraries, the university libraries and the ten non-provincially affiliated public libraries are not integrated and planned into a co-ordinated library system. Each group works largely independently, with the result that a great deal of overlapping of services exists while some essential national services are ignored.

South Africa is a large country with a comparatively small population. She should make the best of her library resources. Today more than ninety per cent of the funds for the four major library groups are provided and/or controlled by the State and yet the State, as well as the library profession, neglects to plan the expenditure and services on a national scale in order to provide an economical and efficient library service.

A few examples will suffice to illustrate this point. Is it necessary in terms of economy and efficiency to have in Cape Town, within a radius of half a mile, five separate major public reference libraries supported practically fully by the State? Why can the

South African Public Library not serve as the central reference library for Cape Town and the whole province with one collection instead of five? Why can it not serve as the central reference library for the Provincial Library Service (European and non-European) and the Cape Town City libraries (European and non-European) as well as being one of the central libraries for the Union? A central reference stock with two separate reading rooms will solve the "apartheid" problem as it has been solved in Pretoria, in the University of South Africa library. All five are public reference libraries of which three have distinct national functions.

There is no sound argument why, in the North, the reference section of the State Library in Pretoria and the Transvaal Provincial Library Services reference section, both public libraries with a national character should not merge. Why must they each have a large reference section? Why must they each build up a Union Catalogue? Why must they each try to perform bibliographical services on a national scale? Why can there not be one library with a large reference section for Pretoria and the whole Province and only separate lending services for Pretoria and the rest of the Province? Their reference sections are expensive to maintain and are both national in character — they were not created for a specific local authority area. They were both instituted to serve the nation as a whole; in this case the whole of the Province of Transvaal.

The same degree of overlapping exists, or will exist, in Port Elizabeth, Kimberley, Bloemfontein and Pietermaritzburg between the public libraries of the respective cities

⁽¹⁾ Continued from *South African Libraries*, 27(3), 85—89, Jan. 1960.

⁽²⁾ This and other statements in this article are commented on in the article on p. 121—124 below. — Ed.

and the Provincial Library's reference sections. There is no logical reason why they should not merge. It will be too ridiculous for words to have four reference libraries in Kimberley or Port Elizabeth and the other cities — two for the province (European and non-European) and two for the city concerned.

BLINDFOLDED BY HISTORY?

Librarians and the State officials should approach this matter objectively and realistically. We cannot allow ourselves to be blindfolded by history and traditions. We must reconsider the functions of our libraries and the organization of its material in terms of library needs today and in the future. We are so used to thinking, for example, in terms of two national libraries, a Library of Parliament and five copyright libraries that we forget to ask why and under what circumstances they were instituted. Consider, for instance, the State Library in Pretoria. It was founded by President Paul Kruger in 1887 as the State Library of the South African Republic — what is today the Transvaal Province. Its functions expanded mainly as a result of the ideals of its Board of Trustees and not according to a pre-planned national system. Today it is not performing the functions listed by its Board of Trustees in 1933, the date of its agreement with the Union Government and the Carnegie Corporation.

The four provincial libraries were founded 15 years ago. If they had been in existence in 1916 the copyright privileges would probably not have been granted to some of the smaller private subscription libraries. If the Provincial Libraries had been in existence in 1933 the State Library would probably not have been suggested by the Carnegie Corporation investigators as the central library with some regional public libraries for a national system in South Africa. The whole library picture has changed.

The central catalogue which the State Library has been compiling for the last 26 years has failed because of the lack of co-operation, goodwill, necessary funds and legislation from the State. Today, in 1959, only seven public libraries co-operate in this project. One of the Provincial Library Services has done more in this direction in three years than the State Library in 26 years,

simply because it has the necessary financial support. If each provincial library compiles a Union Catalogue of the holdings of all the libraries in its Province, as was recommended by the South African Library Association in 1955 at its Port Elizabeth Conference, the State Library's function in this respect will largely be redundant.

TWO NATIONAL LIBRARIES?

Why must South Africa have two so-called "national" libraries? If we compare their declared functions we cannot help but wonder how it is possible for the State, the two Boards of Trustees and the librarians of South Africa to tolerate such a state of affairs. In 1933 in terms of an agreement between the Union Government and the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the State Library agreed to function as a national central (lending) library with the following objectives:

1. To act as the centre of the South African library system;
2. To act as a national lending and reference library supplying on loan to libraries and, in special cases, to individuals, books which cannot be conveniently, or economically, obtained in any other way;
3. To encourage co-operation between all libraries and to provide the mechanism for exchange of books between libraries;
4. To achieve a united national library system and to provide the services of a travelling organiser to assist library authorities in the solution of their difficulties and in the improvement of their library services.
5. To assist in the establishment of rural library services throughout the entire Union;
6. In terms of the Copyright Act, 1916, to act as a repository for all books, periodicals, newspapers and other documents published in the Union of South Africa and to furnish information concerning these publications by means of monthly lists of accessions and other means;
7. To act as a centre of bibliographical information;
8. To act as a free municipal library.

A more recent (1958) list of objectives of the State Library reveals that they are today no different from the above with the exception that the following objective — "to obtain an endowment fund of £200,000" — has been substituted for No. 5.

THE S.A. PUBLIC LIBRARY

The South African Public Library, the second national library, recently officially listed its functions as follows:

1. To serve as the National Reference Library of South Africa; and to provide adequate facilities for the protection, study and display of the library's resources.
2. To maintain, extend and organize for use the great national collections in the library, including the Grey Collection of manuscripts, incunabula and rare books and pamphlets, the Dessinian Collection, the Fairbridge Collection, the Africana Collections, including newspapers, serials, maps and other material relating to Southern Africa; and the South African manuscript collections, including the Merriam, Hofmeyr, Rose-Innes, Graham Bower, Schreiner and Boonzaier Collections.
3. To build up and organize for use the most extensive possible collections of recorded material relating to Africa in general, and Southern Africa, the Union and Cape Town in particular.
4. To act in terms of the Copyright Act of 1916, as amended, as a Library of legal deposit of all books, periodicals, newspapers and other printed material, published in the Union of South Africa, and to provide information concerning this material by means of printed lists of accessions and other publications.
5. To act as a national bibliographical centre, involving among others, the following activities:
 - (a) the provision and publication of information of bibliographical significance relating to Southern Africa, as, for instance, through the medium of the *Quarterly Bulletin of the South African Library* the *Grey Bibliographies* and other means.
 - (b) The maintenance of depository libraries of international signifi-

cance, such as those of the United Nations Organisation and UNESCO, acting as a link with UNESCO and other bodies concerned with the promotion of library co-operation on the widest possible basis.

- (c) The encouragement of co-operation between all libraries in Southern Africa and the provision of facilities for the exchange of books between libraries.
6. To build up, maintain and organize for use collections of books and other recorded material, and to provide the necessary qualified staff to ensure that such collections shall be put to the greatest amount of use for research purposes.
7. For the time being, and until the City of Cape Town has taken over its functions as a local lending library, to act as a central lending library for Cape Town.

By reading the two statements it is clear that the two national libraries hardly ever consulted each other in deciding on their respective functions. Both libraries claim to be the national reference library; both claim to act as a national bibliographical centre; both regard it as their function to provide facilities for the exchange of books between libraries. In 1933 the State Library assumed the responsibility of compiling a Union Catalogue. In 1937 the Inter-departmental Committee recommended that the South African Public Library should compile the Union Catalogue. The State Library still has, as its objective in 1959, to provide the services of a travelling organiser to assist library authorities in the solution of their difficulties and in the improvement of their library services notwithstanding the fact that this function was taken over by the Provinces and the Union Government 15 years ago. The State Library and the South African Public Library are supposed, according to their statement of objectives, to assist other libraries in their difficulties, but in the meantime they are themselves in such deep financial waters that they can hardly help even themselves. They are two of the most scantily treated libraries, in terms of income, not only in South Africa but in the whole world. They cannot perform their own functions because of a faulty national library

system, but are still expected to help others. The State Library is however in a still poorer position by reason of still being responsible for the public library service of Pretoria. The question to be considered is whether we really need two national libraries in a country (together with four provincial libraries) to serve a literate population of approximately six million?

The State Library in Pretoria and the South African Public Library in Cape Town are inherently an integral part of our public library system in South Africa. One cannot separate these two institutions from the public library system. They are the purest form of public library — a library for the general public, and not for a special clientele such as those of the university, school or special libraries. They admittedly — and rightly so — concentrate more on the documentation and preservation function of the public library than on the communication function. This is however true of the reference sections of the Provincial Libraries and all large public libraries such as New York, Chicago, Johannesburg and Cape Town. They tend to resemble the University and special libraries in their documentation function to make facilities available for the researcher.

LEGAL POSITION

Legally the public libraries are delegated to the four provinces by virtue of the Financial Relations Act of 1913. The two "national" libraries were deliberately excluded. Why? The only reason can be that at that time they were the only two libraries that were supposed to serve a wider area than just their own towns — they were, in other words, national or provincial in character, and are still so today. In the meantime the four provincial libraries were founded — also on a wider basis than just their own home towns. They are of a national character — in this case geographically provincial. Were the provincial libraries founded to perform the communication function of the public library only? Surely not. They are today by far the strongest links in our whole public library system. Their reference

sections grow much faster than any other library in South Africa. The Transvaal Provincial Library system is today quantitatively performing a far greater service than the State Library in terms of inter-library loans, leadership, a centre of a library system, reference services, encouraging library co-operation, and bibliographical information — all alleged functions of the State Library. Through the Transvaal Provincial Library 41,743 special requests were provided in 1958 as against 17,342 through the State Library in 1957. The same is true of the Cape Provincial Library system in relation to the South African Public Library in Cape Town.

It is a recognised fact that in terms of international standards our two "national" libraries are nearly at the bottom of the list as compared with other national libraries in the world, even in comparison with young national libraries such as that of Canada which was founded as recently as 1953.^(*)

What is the reason for all this? It is surely not the fault of the libraries concerned. They do a wonderful job in terms of their income. We are all very proud of our two national institutions but feel also very sad to see them struggling financially so unnecessarily. The main reason for this state of affairs is naturally their awkward legal foundation and the critical lack of funds. These two libraries are not government controlled libraries — although called national libraries. They are administered as state-aided institutions under a board of Trustees. If we compare their finances with their respective Provincial libraries and other large public libraries, their incomes are pathetically inadequate.

^(*) The following statement recently made by Dr. Keyes D. Metcalf, the distinguished American librarian who visited South Africa last year, is appropriate: "South Africa's national libraries are well below world standard and the financial support they get from the State appears to be quite inadequate. South Africa is doing far less than most smaller countries — even than most younger States — in building up an adequate national and research library" (*Pretoria News*, 13 May 1959).

Income of the National Libraries in relation to other public libraries and Provincial Library systems in South Africa

<i>Name of Library</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Year</i>
State Library, Pretoria (excluding Pretoria Municipal Service)	£ 27,869	1957
South African Public Library	£ 29,682	1958
Cape Provincial Library Service	£452,420	1958
Transvaal Provincial Library Service	£142,190	1958
Johannesburg Public Library	£192,459	1958
City Libraries, Cape Town	£121,921	1958

This state of affairs is not something that South Africa can be proud of.

Can the Government be blamed for this? I do not think so. Any Government is naturally cautious in spending its money on services which it is not absolutely sure are organized according to sound economic principles and which are in keeping with the principles of efficiency and good administration and organization. Neither of the two institutions concerned could claim this because they are performing services that largely overlap each other and that of the Provincial Library Services, whose functions are prescribed by law. As an economist and a librarian I strongly urge that no more public money should be spent on library services that could and should for reasons of economy and efficiency be amalgamated.

A NEW APPROACH

It will not be possible to amalgamate the two quasi-national libraries to form a strong national library. The country is traditionally a two-dimensional structure. We have two official languages, two State capitals; one in Pretoria, the Administrative capital; and the other in Cape Town, the seat of the Parliament. We have tried for 50 years to have two national libraries without success. The size of the country and its population do not warrant two national libraries and in addition — 500 yards removed from the South African Public Library — is another copyright library, the Library of Parliament.

What we need is a new approach towards the organization of material for use and to the functions of the two national libraries and the four Provincial libraries. To me, it is very obviously advisable to combine the reference and national functions of the State Library with that of the Transvaal Provincial Library Service in order to form a strong central library in the North with

all its numerous little libraries in Pretoria and on the Witwatersrand. Pretoria City should now accept its responsibility and provide its own municipal library service. The only other large important complex of libraries is in Cape Town and vicinity. Why not combine the national characteristics of the South African Public Library with those of the Cape Provincial Library Service? Although the functions of the four libraries concerned are not completely identical, they have enough in common to be brought together for economy and efficiency reasons alone — let alone the sad fact that the two financially weaker institutions are slowly being throttled by circumstances beyond their control: an impossible legal framework within which to perform their important functions.

SCOPE FOR CO-OPERATIVE PLANNING

Not only in the field of public libraries do we find little co-operation in the organization of library material at present, but in the field of school and public libraries there is serious overlapping and wrong planning. We need more co-operation between all types of libraries and other services in South Africa. We need a well-planned national library acquisition policy which will knit together all our library resources — public, university, special, and school libraries. There are many foreign publications which South Africa should receive but does not receive because of lack of funds. On the other hand, we duplicate many expensive publications, which are seldom used, in a number of libraries while a single copy in the country, readily available through an inter-library loan, could suffice.

The 369 public libraries, with 1,500 public library depots and 5,000 school libraries for Europeans, Asiatics and Coloureds are provincial concerns and are on the road towards closer co-operation in material organization.

The ten university libraries, the two state-aided libraries, the 5,000 Bantu schools and 104 special departmental libraries are under the auspices of the Union Government. The required bookstock for public libraries is approximately ten million; for the schools twenty million; for the universities five million; and for the special libraries two million. The control and acquisition of the eventual total national bookstock of approximately thirty-seven million books for which the State provides most of the funds, should be co-ordinated and planned on a national basis. The total capital layout in our libraries is estimated at twenty-five million pounds. For this important task librarians should unite and plan its national library service as a matter of real urgency. We cannot afford to let the standard of scientific research, our whole educational system and the intellectual and cultural development of the people be crippled by the lack of an organized co-operative library system.

CONTRIBUTION OF THE CAPE PROVINCIAL LIBRARY SERVICE

In the field of co-operative storage of little used material, sufficient shelving space has been allocated in the Provincial buildings to be erected in Cape Town, Kimberley and Port Elizabeth.

A monthly journal — *The Cape Librarian* — is being published (since November, 1957) to foster co-operation among public libraries and to review and introduce to the public the recently acquired material.

In the field of subject specialization the larger public libraries in the Cape have each been allocated a subject area for which it is responsible in building up a complete as possible collection. The few thousand periodical titles are organized in such a way that the maximum variety of bound copies are available in each of the three major geographical areas — Northern, Eastern and South-Western Cape.

Close co-operation exists between our public libraries and school libraries. Library material for both is being bought and "processed" by the Provincial Library Services in Cape Town. The Provincial Education Department assists us in the selection of material for schools and further organizes the service within the schools.

READER RESEARCH

The Library Service has introduced, by means of punched cards, an elaborate research programme into the reading habits of its clientele. Every book (fiction or non-fiction) is not only catalogued and classified according to the traditional methods but is further processed by completing and coding the following details on punched cards:

1. Pagination.
2. Production: in which country produced.
3. Level: viz.
 - Not popular or ephemeral, or notable. Critics' choices, classics, best books. Notables, standard works.
 - Popular ephemeral, bait.
 - Popular non-ephemeral, best sellers.
4. Classification:
 - English novels with South African setting.
 - Animal stories.
 - Religious novels.
 - Humorous novels.
 - County and rural novels.
 - Adventure, sea and sport novels.
 - Historical novels.
 - Romances.
 - Detection, crime, mystery and ghosts.
 - Cowboys and Westerns.
 - Straight, family and sociological novels.
 - War novels.
 - Experimental psychological and expressionistic novels.
 - Science fiction.
5. Age level: Pre-school, E 3-5 years.
E 6-7 years.
E and J 8-9 years.
J 10-14 years.
6. Illustrations, type, number, etc.
7. Author's nationality.
8. Juvenile fiction classification:
 - Religious stories.
 - Science fiction.
 - Historical and war stories.
 - Animal stories.
 - Girls' school stories.
 - Boys' school stories.
 - Girls' mystery, adventure, detection, etc.
 - Boys' mystery, adventures, detection, etc.
 - Family mystery, adventures, detection, etc.
 - Fairy stories and phantasy.

9. Collections:

- Single vol. short stories, or collection by single author.
- Single vol. short stories, or collection by multiple authors.
- More than 1 vol. formally issued and numbered series usually N.F.
- More than 1 vol. loose fictional series centred around same characters.

10. Treatment:

- N.F. General.
- N.F. Popular
- N.F. Textbooks.
- N.F. Scholarly.
- N.F. Technical.
- F. Sophisticated.
- F. Simple.

11. Translation.

12. Type of jacket.

Not only is all possible information about the books recorded, but every member of each library is requested to supply certain personal information on the reverse side of the usual application for membership form: The following information on the punched cards is recorded about all members:

1. Name.
2. Number.
3. Year of birth.
4. Sex.
5. Race.
6. Occupation.
7. Home language.
8. Hobbies.
9. Marital status.
10. Nature of domicile.
11. Educational standard.

12. Religion.

13. Distance from library (in $\frac{1}{4}$ miles).

All this detailed information about the book and that about the reader is coded on punched cards to enable mechanical sorting out at a very high speed of any desired information and tabulated to show up any possible correlations. The results of these research projects can have far-reaching effects on our library material selection policy and the general influence of the public library service on the cultural, intellectual and educational standard of the people.

We are now investigating the possibility of linking some of our libraries by means of Telex in order to speed up our special request and information service.

In our new £4 million building in Cape Town as well as in our new reference libraries in Kimberley and Port Elizabeth compact book storage shelving, electronically controlled, will be installed. By this method we can store at least 100% more books in the same area as in orthodox shelving. The Cape Town building will have a shelving capacity of 1,114,000 books, and the Kimberley building 500,000 books.

The new Head Office building in Cape Town also has provided for a conveyor belt of 2,000 feet in the production section of the service.

In this vital matter of organizing library material for use there are many facets remaining to be explored, yet if these efforts could be linked and skilfully integrated with similar projects in the three Northern Provinces, the advantages in terms of economy and efficiency could be greater still.

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY PLANNING

Plans have been announced for the preparation of a long-needed book on the planning of college and university library buildings under the direction of Dr. Keyes D. Metcalf, Librarian Emeritus of Harvard, who visited South Africa in 1959 and will be remembered with affection by the many librarians in the Union with whom he came into contact. The Council on Library Resources has made a grant of \$73,365 for this project, which will be sponsored by the

Association of Research Libraries in co-operation with the Association of College and Research Libraries, a division of the American Library Association. The manual will collect and synthesize the information available in the extensive but scattered literature, and will draw on the expert knowledge of librarians who have served in recent years as consultants for building projects. Preparation of the book, which will be illustrated by drawing and photographs, is expected to take at least four years.

THE MEANING OF A NATIONAL LIBRARY, AND SOME COMMENTS ON THE ORGANIZATIONAL POINT OF VIEW

by

D. H. VARLEY

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IN HIS interesting contribution to the Library Planning symposium at the Potchefstroom Conference of the S.A. Library Association last year,⁽¹⁾ Mr. Th. Friis put forward an eloquent plea for the better use of existing library resources throughout the Union, and for the co-operative use of the technological devices now becoming available in South Africa. He also described in outline some of the important contributions that have been made with such effect in the Cape Province during the past five years. The rapid growth of this Library Service in the face of many difficulties, and over an area larger than the other three Provinces put together, has been remarkable by any standards. Advantage has been taken of the opportunity to introduce new methods and media, and the progress of the service is being watched with great interest by librarians throughout the Union.

The views of a colleague with large-scale experience of library organization are therefore likely to be worth hearing. In putting forward his proposals for an integrated national library service, however, with characteristic enthusiasm, Mr. Friis seems to me to have made several statements which are either not entirely in accordance with the facts, or which need substantial clarification. Since these statements were originally made to the Association's Conference in Potchefstroom in 1959, are now printed in our official journal, and are also appearing in the journal *Cape Librarian*, it seems desirable to examine them more closely in their South African context. Since they relate for the most part to the two National Libraries (the South African Public Library in Cape Town and the State Library in Pretoria) they will be dealt with in sequence, and in direct relation to the general question: what is a National Library?

THE COMPONENTS OF A NATIONAL LIBRARY SYSTEM

In every country where library services are at all developed, they can be grouped by various characteristics, e.g., municipal, University, special, their totality forming an aggregate of libraries within the nation concerned. Depending on the degree of inter-communication and co-operation between these different types of libraries, one can speak of a national library service or system, of which the main cementing element is, or should be, the type of library known as a *national library*.

At the Unesco symposium on National Libraries in Europe held in Vienna in September 1958, it was recognized that the term "national library" was merely a common denominator for various types of institutions, and for that reason it was decided not to formulate definitions at the outset but rather to identify and evaluate the activities undertaken by national libraries.

These activities are too numerous to recount in the present article, and anyone interested can read about them for himself in the Final Summary Report of the Unesco Conference. But the main characteristics in common between most if not all national libraries are, firstly, the fact that they primarily serve the whole nation and not a geographical part (although they may combine that function with a more localized activity) being supported, in recognition of that fact, chiefly by State funds; secondly, the fact that they are in a central position (not necessarily geographically) in relation to the libraries of the nation as a whole, and provide bibliographical and other services to

(1) Printed in *S.A.L.*, 27 (3 & 4), 85-89, 114-20, Jan. & April, 1960.

the advantage of all those libraries; and thirdly, that they are deeply concerned with the building up of the nation's own literature as well as of reference and research collections of a high standard, and with the *conservation* and *exploitation*, rather than the wide *dissemination*, of such resources.

In varying degree, the two National Libraries in South Africa have attempted, with scanty financial resources, to carry out these functions, and with a considerable measure of success. In the remarks that follow I confine myself to the Library that I know best — the S.A. Public Library — which is not only the senior library in the country in point of years, but of which General Hertzog said in 1927 that it "is more than a mere Cape Town or Cape institution — it is a national South African institution".

WHAT IS "NATIONAL"?

In dealing with these matters in his article, Mr. Friis appears to confuse several elements: national library, national library system, and Provincial Library. Of the four Provincial libraries in the Union, for instance, he says that "they are of a national character — in this case geographically provincial" (p. 117). Elsewhere he speaks of the reference sections of the State Library, Pretoria, and of the Transvaal Provincial Library as being "both national in character" (p. 114). Again, referring to the libraries in Cape Town with reference facilities he says that "three of them have distinct national functions". But they cannot all be national — by definition — except insofar as they contribute to the general pool of library resources, in which case the same might be said of, for instance, the Durban or Johannesburg Public Libraries, which do not receive State support. Or does Mr. Friis mean that since Provincial libraries receive indirect State support (i.e., from the Union Government) they are to be regarded, in that respect, as having "national characteristics"? In using the word "national" so loosely it seems to me that Mr. Friis confuses the issue, and his case for closer association is weakened to that extent.

THE LEGAL BASIS OF A NATIONAL LIBRARY

Elsewhere in his article Mr. Friis makes considerable play with the assertion that

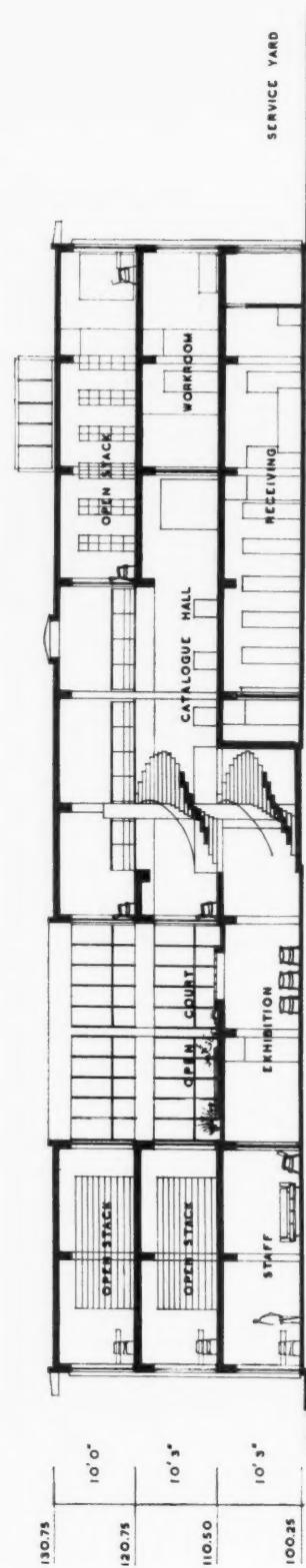
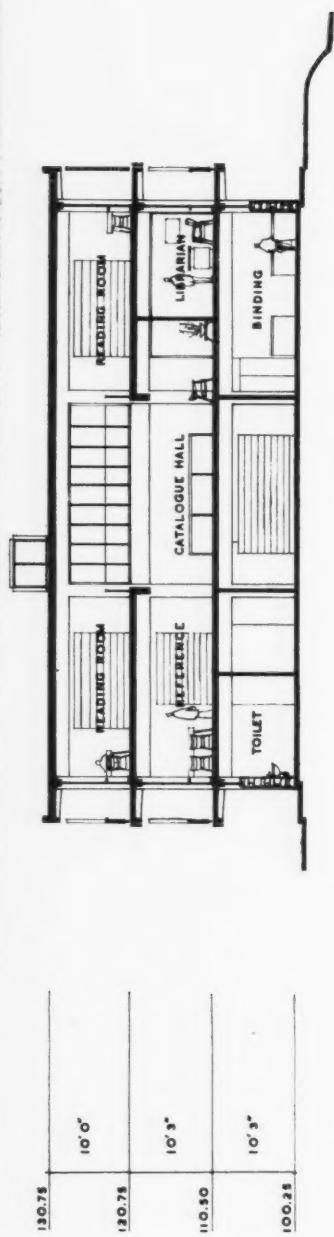
the functions of the Provincial services are defined by law, while those of the "so-called" national libraries are not. This argument, though superficially disarming, does not bear much examination. It is true that the South African Public Library (for instance) has no Act similar to that which established the National Library of Canada in 1953, specifically conferring the status of national library upon it; but then neither has the British Museum, nor have the Bibliothèque Nationale or the Library of Congress, but no librarian would seriously contest their claim to be regarded as national libraries. The fact is that so far as the South African Public Library is concerned, those who have "so-called" the Library a national institution, or confirmed its national character, have included three Government Commissions, a Government Inter-Departmental Committee, a leading Q.C., a Prime Minister (General Hertzog) and a Governor-General (the late Dr. Jansen), in addition to which the Library is specifically reserved to the Union Government in the Second Schedule of the Financial Relations Act of 1913 on account of its national character. This is not to say that the position might not be clarified by specific legislation, as in the case of Canada, but Mr. Friis' contention does show a somewhat exaggerated belief in the legal instrument as such, and a corresponding lack of respect for the historical background of a contemporary situation.

"BLINDFOLDED BY HISTORY"

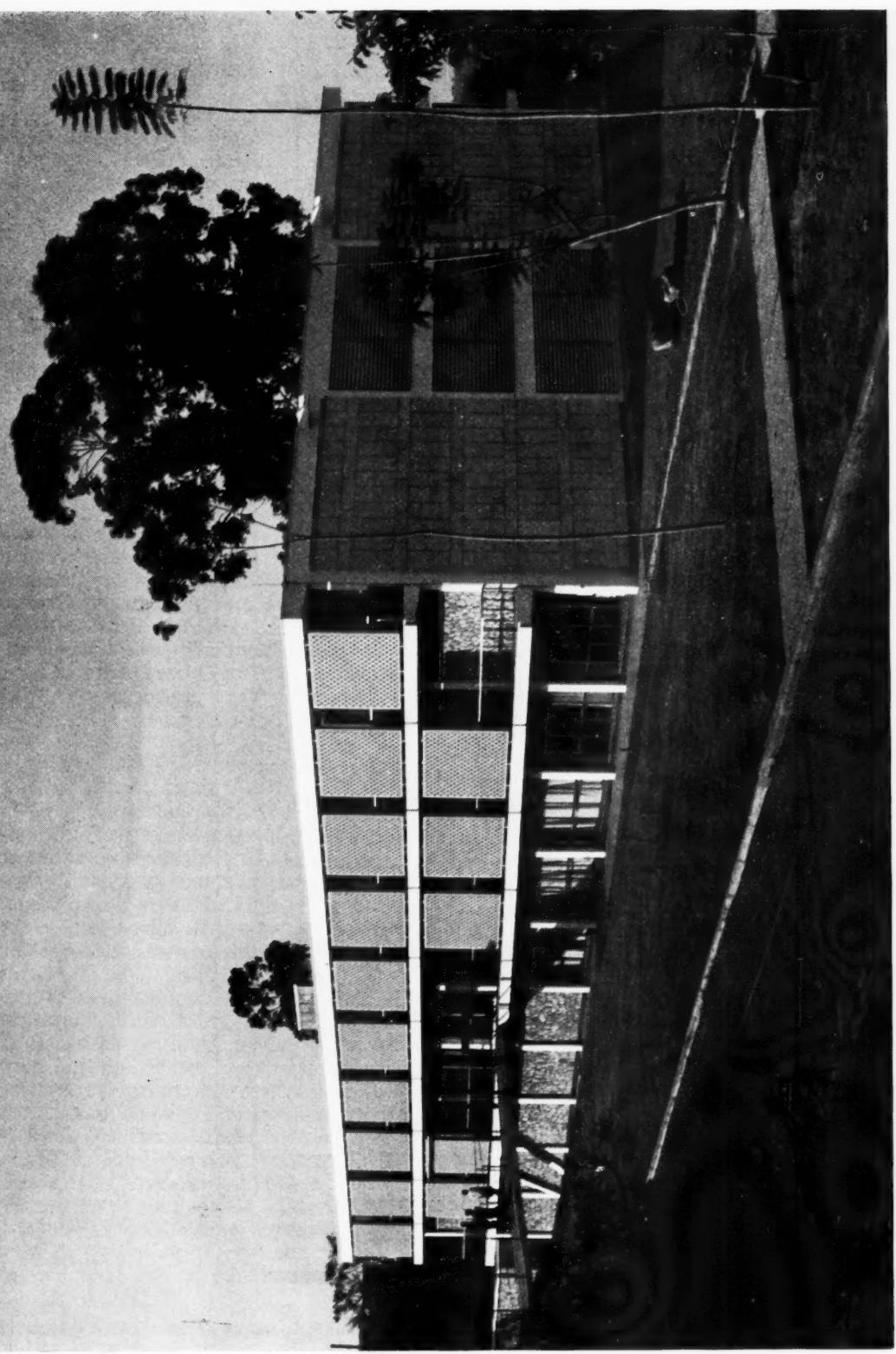
In this context one is struck by a phrase used by Mr. Friis in his article: "We cannot allow ourselves to be blindfolded by history and tradition". But surely it is not history that blindfolds us, but we who blindfold ourselves, or each other? Our libraries in South Africa, as our President, Elizabeth Taylor, reminded us at the Potchefstroom Conference, are the creation as well as the guardians of human knowledge throughout the ages. Indeed, by disregarding the historical background of our library "present", we are bound to take a partial view of the total picture, and in so doing, are falling into precisely the error against which Mr. Friis is trying to warn us.

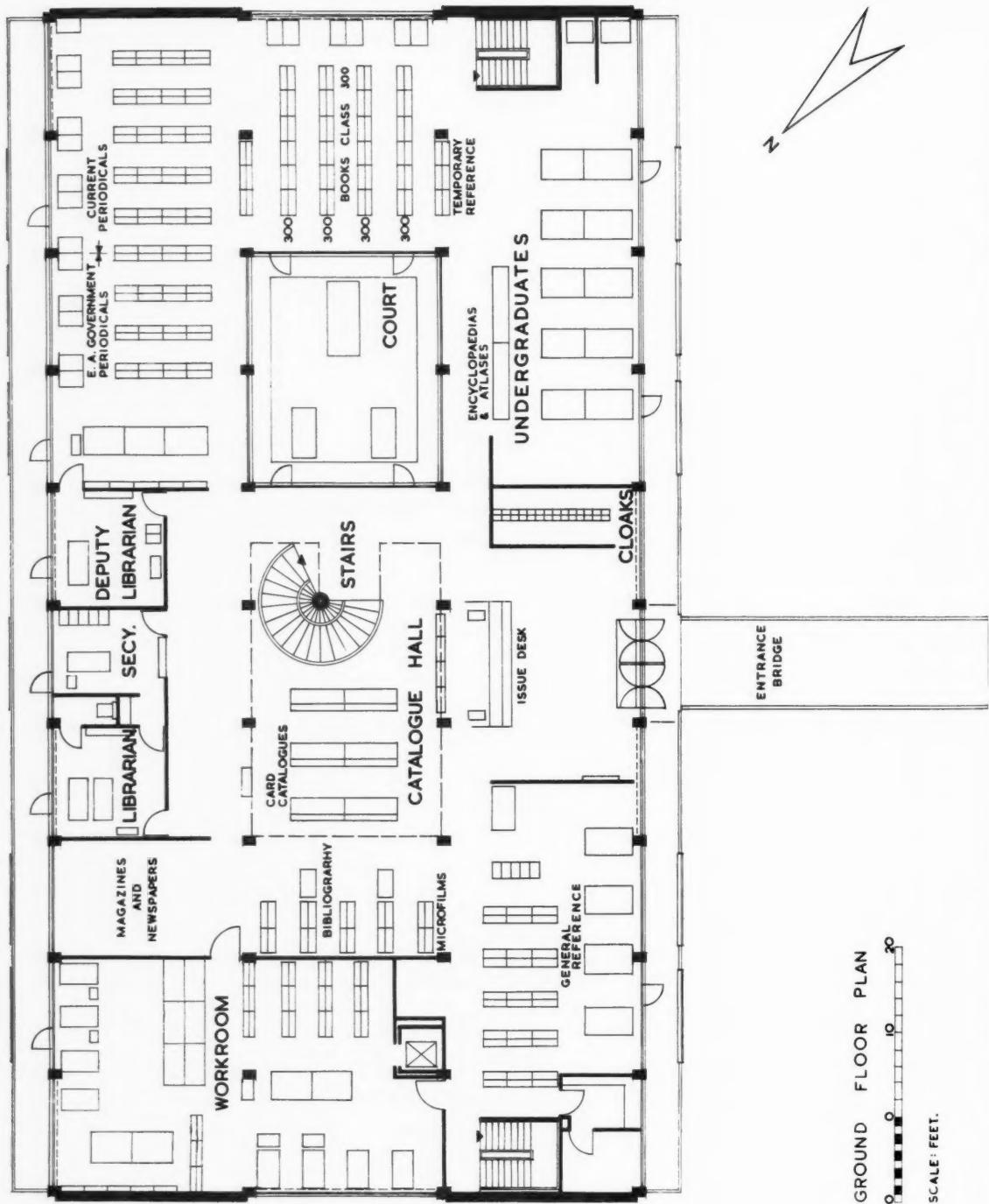


MAINTENANCE COLLECTOR AND EQUIPMENT CENTER



MAKERERE COLLEGE LIBRARY, SHOWING CERAMIC TILE SCREENS





PERCENTAGES

To return to his article, however, he states (p. 114) that "the four provincial library systems co-ordinate the majority (97.5%) of public library services in South Africa". The basis of calculating this percentage is not stated, but if it is a mere counting of heads, e.g. single libraries irrespective of size or coverage, it is somewhat misleading. One has only to consider that the City library services at Johannesburg, Durban and Pretoria, with an estimated total European population of 672,961, are outside the provincial orbit altogether, and that the public libraries at Cape Town (City Libraries), Port Elizabeth and East London, which receive provincial grants-in-aid, are all administered as completely separate units, while those at Pietermaritzburg and Bloemfontein receive grants-in-aid in respect of their copyright work, but are otherwise independent entities (add another 419,110 European population), to realize that these libraries represent between them perhaps half the public library expenditure in the Union, and serve nearly half the European inhabitants, and many non-Europeans as well.

THE CAPE TOWN SITUATION

But it is in dealing with the supposed situation in Cape Town that one finds confusion worse confounded. "Is it necessary in terms of economy and efficiency to have in Cape Town", says Mr. Friis, "within a radius of half-a-mile, five separate major public reference libraries supported practically fully by the State?" "All five", he goes on to say, "are public reference libraries, of which three have distinct national functions". But the only public reference libraries in Cape Town, now and at the time Mr. Friis' paper was written, are the South African Public Library (one) and the Central Reference Library of the Cape Provincial Library Service: total—two⁽²⁾. Mr. Hood, the City Librarian of Cape Town, has clearly stated that the City Council has no intention of establishing a reference library of its own while the citizens of Cape Town can make use of the South African

Public Library. The Library of Parliament is not a public library in any sense of the word. So there are two public reference libraries in Cape Town — and how *three* of them can have "distinct national functions" when only one of them is a national library, passes one's comprehension.

THE "OVERLAPPING" MYTH

This brings us to Mr. Friis' case for "amalgamation" on the grounds that the libraries concerned are "overlapping" in functions and book-stocks. This is not the place to examine this "overlapping" fallacy in any detail, but it can be said without any hesitation that the degree of "overlapping" between, say, the South African Public Library and the Cape Provincial Library Service, is negligible. One early conclusion to be drawn from the deliberations of the Action Committee on Library Co-operation is that so far as research material is concerned, the stocks in the South African Public Library are incomparably stronger than those in the Cape Provincial Service, and in view of its far longer history, this is not surprising.

In this connection it is interesting to note that in spite of its known financial handicaps the South African Public Library managed to acquire, in 1958, two-and-a-half times as many non-fiction titles as the Cape Provincial Library, which had forty times its buying power — and many of these titles were the more expensive reference and research books which one would expect to find in a national reference library.

Indeed, this "overlapping" argument can be used in more directions than one. If it is public money that is at stake, is there not a strong case for devoting as much as possible to the building-up of the existing reference and research collections — e.g., at the South African Public Library? But it will have to be done without disturbing the identity or independence of that institution.

MUST THE STATE CALL THE TUNE?

This brings us to another question, and a fundamental one, and it is suggested by the following phrase in Mr. Friis' article:

⁽²⁾ Or if Mr. Friis counts his Central Reference Library as two — European and non-European — total: three.

"the control and acquisition of the eventual total national bookstock of approximately thirty-seven million books *for which the State provides most of the funds* (our italics) should be co-ordinated and planned on a national basis" (p. 119). This statement, which may at first hearing seem unexceptionable, has however a disturbing undertone: the implication that the State, in providing the funds (if this really is so), may call the tune.

If this theory of government aid is to be proclaimed official doctrine, then a sharp note of warning to all librarians in the country should be sounded. It is an incontrovertible fact that the library services of this country have been built up on the basis of local and individual initiative, and if any attempt is made to dictate from above how libraries may or may not spend their funds, there are likely to be some difficulties ahead. So far, such threats have been officially denied, but the price of library self-respect, like that of civilization, is eternal vigilance.

THE "ORGANIZATIONAL POINT OF VIEW"

This leads us back to the starting-point of Mr. Friis' article. With the main thesis expressed there — that the maximum use should be made of our existing library re-

sources, through careful planning, there can be nothing but praise. The rub lies in the word "planning". Who is to do the planning? The State — or the libraries themselves?

The keyword is "organization". Organization may be a good servant, but it can also be a tyrannical master. Applied to any form of human endeavour it has many uses, and many of these are intrinsically excellent. But it must never be forgotten that organization is only a means to an end; it is dangerously easy to make it an end in itself. In considering the "organizational" point of view, therefore, one has to preserve a balance and a mean between "efficiency" and "economy" on the one hand, and man in all his imperfections on the other. The librarian, in particular (or so it seems to me) must steer a middle course in these matters, or he will lose sight of his *raison d'être* in the body politic.

Finally, to clear away any misunderstandings in advance, may I say that in airing these views in our journal my purpose has been to try and stir the thought-processes of my colleagues in South Africa (in particular) in these matters of fundamental professional importance, and to try to increase their awareness of the principles and issues that I am convinced are at stake in this "great debate".

The Editor invites correspondence on the points raised in this and the preceding article.

THE FOLGER LIBRARY, 1950—1960

Most librarians know — or get to know in time — that the Folger Library in Washington is the fortunate possessor of no fewer than 79 copies of the Shakespeare First Folio (in various states of completeness), 58 of the Second Folio, 24 of the Third, and 36 of the Fourth. Comparatively few, however, probably know the typically American story of the gathering of this fabulous collection by its founder, an oil tycoon, or the fact that it is administered by the College — Amherst — where Folger was first fired with a taste for Elizabethan literature. Those fortunate enough to have visited Washington for themselves, however, will know that the Folger Library, nearly thirty years after its opening, has become one of the foremost research institutions in

the Western World, supporting a research programme which provides fellowships for the scholars best equipped to use its resources, and carrying out a publishing programme of very high calibre indeed. An account of its work during the past decade has just been published; this should be required reading for all students in library school in South Africa, for it describes in terms of measured enthusiasm what we most grievously lack in the Union — a properly endowed research library in any of the most important fields of knowledge, and in the humanities in particular.

The Folger Library: a decade of growth, 1950-1960. Washington, Folger Shakespeare Library, 1960.

THE SEYMOUR MEMORIAL LIBRARY: A LINK BETWEEN JOHANNESBURG AND THE U.S.A.

by

R. F. KENNEDY

City Librarian, Johannesburg

FROM ITS VERY beginning in 1886 the Witwatersrand Goldfield was operated by large companies or groups of companies. This was inevitable owing to the nature of the reef, much capital for heavy plant and machinery being required for profitable exploitation. Highly qualified and experienced mining and mechanical engineers were needed, and many of these came from the United States of America. A Chamber of Mines was founded, scientific and technical societies were formed, and within a year or two of the discovery the mining industry on which Johannesburg was founded was a very highly organized entity. Incidentally, the influx of professional men soon led to the establishment of educational and cultural institutions in the infant town. The Johannesburg Public Library, for instance, was founded only two and a half years after the proclamation of the goldfield.

The Chamber of Mines, the scientific and technical societies and the mining companies early appreciated that this great industry could not continue to operate without a special library where up-to-date books on geology, mining, metallurgy and related subjects could be consulted, and where the specialist periodicals would be kept and organized for use. The Geological Society of South Africa, founded in 1895, was already building up a museum and library on its subject, but beyond this little had been done when the South African War broke out in 1899. The mines closed down and the leaders of the mining industry removed themselves to Cape Town.

Among those who went to Cape Town in 1899, was Louis Irving Seymour, Consulting Engineer to the Rand Mines, Limited, Consulting Mining and Mechanical Engineer to Messrs. H. Eckstein and Company, and President of the South African Association of Engineers. In Cape Town he was the prime mover in raising the Pioneer Railway Regi-

ment of which, although he was a citizen of the U.S.A., he became second-in-command, with the rank of major. This Regiment was recruited almost entirely from engineers and mechanics from the Witwatersrand, and it was said at the time that in no other body in the world was there such an aggregation of engineering knowledge and talent. The work of the Regiment was to repair bridges and railways and to construct new ones when necessary. Major Seymour was killed on 14th June, 1900, while defending the lines of communication near the railway bridge at Virginia in the Orange Free State.

THE FOUNDER

Louis Irving Seymour was born at Whitney Point, Broome County, New York State, on 23rd December 1860. He was educated in his native village and at the age of seventeen he entered the machine shops of John Cotter at Norwalk and after three years went to the Lackawanna Iron and Coal Company, and in 1884 accepted an offer from the Dickson Manufacturing Co. to erect a mill engine for the El Callao Gold Mining Company in Venezuela. He finished his contract and became Chief Mechanical Engineer of the Company. He returned to the United States in 1886, held several important engineering posts, and in 1890 was appointed Chief Mechanical Engineer for the De Beers Consolidated Mines at Kimberley. In 1893 he was Managing Director of Fraser and Chalmers at Erith, England. He returned to South Africa in 1896 as Mechanical Engineer to the Rand Mines, Ltd., and very soon became the most trusted adviser to the biggest mining group on the Witwatersrand on all mining and mechanical matters. This brilliant young engineer was a very remarkable man. Not only was he an ingenious mechanical engineer; he

was also an outstanding organizer, and superb as an administrator and executive head. He was a man of outstanding character: friendly, just, and magnanimous; loved and respected by all with whom he came into contact.

His loss came as a severe blow to his many friends and colleagues, and less than three weeks after his death a meeting was held in Cape Town to create a fund and decide on a fitting and worthy memorial to him. It was decided to establish a technical library for the free use of the inhabitants of Johannesburg and neighbourhood. The committee collected £11,477 and when the Transvaal Technical Institute (later the University of the Witwatersrand) was appointed trustee, it was stipulated that the fund should never be allowed to fall below £8,000, the interest on this sum to be used for the maintenance of the Library.

GROWTH OF THE LIBRARY

The Seymour Memorial Library was opened in February, 1905, in a room in the Johannesburg Public Library. It started with 2,300 volumes. Shortly thereafter the Geological Society of South Africa transferred its excellent library to the Seymour Library and it has continued to place its exchanges in the Library ever since. The Seymour Memorial Library remained in the Public Library until 1908 when it was transferred to the Transvaal University College (successor to the Transvaal Technical Institute). At the end of 1907 the Librarian reported that the total stock was 4,233 volumes and that 682 volumes had been added during the year.

From 1908 to about 1920 the Library passed through an uneventful period of useful work. In 1920 the books in the Library numbered 11,500 bound volumes, in addition to some thousands of government documents and pamphlets. The annual income was approximately £790, a totally inadequate sum for the building up and maintenance of a technical library. The University College was shortly to become an autonomous university and to move to a site about two miles out of town. The question arose whether the Seymour Library should go with the University, be transferred to the Public Library, or be maintained as a separate entity by the scientific and technical societies.

The University was the trustee and was very anxious to retain the Seymour Library, but the societies were strongly opposed to its removal from the centre of the town. They would have liked to have taken it over themselves but they had not the necessary funds, and so they favoured its transfer to the Public Library. After years of negotiation the University agreed to this course and in 1927 the Seymour Library once more became part of the Public Library. The trust was transferred to the City Council on behalf of the Public Library in 1933.

TRANSFER TO J.P.L.

For a few years prior to the transfer, the Seymour Memorial Library had been experiencing great financial difficulties; the cost of books, binding and periodicals had risen and the income of the Library had decreased. Very few books had been purchased for several years, the subscriptions to many essential periodicals had lapsed, and there was a big accumulation of material requiring to be bound. It was decided to devote the income from the Trust to periodical subscriptions and binding and for the Public Library to provide the funds for salaries, general maintenance and the purchase of books. When the Trust was passed to the City Council, the Public Library's collection of books and periodicals on science and technology was transferred to the Seymour Library and this greatly enlarged and improved the stock. With the decrease in the purchasing power of money the present income from the Trust does not suffice for binding. Fortunately the City Council's Library vote is sufficient to meet all reasonable needs of the Seymour Memorial Library. Gaps in periodicals sets have as far as possible been filled, all current important books in science and technology are purchased, and there are no arrears of binding.

The relationship between the Seymour Memorial Library and the various scientific and technical societies is very close and cordial. In fact, the societies look upon the Library as their library. To some extent this is true, for it receives all periodicals sent in exchange for the societies' publications. The exchanges of the Geological Society of South Africa are particularly valuable, coming from all parts of the world.

The City Council is aware of the value of these exchange periodicals and has for several years paid a subsidy to the Geological Society to enable it to print a greater number of copies of its Transactions than it could from its own resources. The societies are represented on the book-selection committee of the Library, and they print lists of accessions to their special subjects in the pages of their journals.

When the Seymour Memorial Library was returned to the Public Library it was reclassified and recatalogued. The Dewey Decimal classification, which, with expansions and modifications, is used throughout the Public Library, was found to be insufficiently detailed and many parts of the then classification of the Science Library at South Kensington were grafted on to Dewey. It is now greatly regretted that we did not then adopt U.D.C. A classified catalogue of the collection is maintained.

CONTENTS AND USES OF THE LIBRARY

About 3,000 volumes a year are added to the stock of the Seymour Memorial Library; the total stock now being roughly 75,000 volumes. The strength of the collection is its sets of periodicals, the British Patent specifications, the runs of government publications such as geological survey memoirs from many countries, the bibliographic aids of the abstract and periodical index type, and big sets such as the Great Barrier Reef Committee reports, transactions of the World Power Conference, the reports of the Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition, and the proceedings of the International Conferences on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy. Perhaps the rarest book in the Library, and incidentally a very useful one, is the *Monumenta Cartographica Africæ et Aegypti* of Prince Youssouf Kamal. Only one hundred

copies of this magnificent 16-volume work were printed and all except the Prince's own copy were given to institutions.

The service given by the Seymour Memorial Library is more like that of a public than a special library. It serves too many people to give them a special library service. It serves however as the special library of many corporations and industries in Johannesburg. These bodies employ librarians to use the S.M.L. on their behalf. Most of the people so employed by outside bodies are ex-employees of the Library; they know their way about, have the free run of the Library stacks, and are able to make the best use of the Library on behalf of their employers. The Library is essentially a library of reference, but books are lent to local libraries and corporations, to individual members of the various societies, and through the inter-library loan system to people throughout southern and central Africa. Material that cannot be lent is photographed on the premises against a small fee.

When Major Seymour's friends established the Library in his memory they can have had little idea of the important place the Memorial would occupy in science and technology in South Africa more than fifty years later. As the sciences and technologies become more and more specialized they become more and more complex, and the need for scientific and technical literature, properly organized for use, becomes more and more necessary. The Seymour Memorial is able to satisfy most of the needs of those calling on its resources. The librarian is not often privileged to know the result of the work for which his literature is used. It was, therefore, pleasing to receive recently from a borrower in Ghana the assurance "that your help has gone a long way to finding more gold in this mine, which had when I came here a limited life but now may have a longer future".

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AFRIKAANSE LITERATUUR VAN DIE VIERDE KWARTAAL VAN
1959

deur

D. L. EHLERS

LETTERKUNDE

Boerneef: *Ghaap en kambro.* Nasionale boekhandel.

'n Verdere versameling versies of rympies van die soort wat in die skrywer se *Krokos* voorkom. Meeste rympies is 'n klankryke spel met woorde soos uit die volksmond opgeteken of nagedig. Hierdie soort digwerk is 'n welkome afwisseling van die ernstige, soms alte serebrale poësie waarmee sommige van ons beste digters hulle die afgelope tyd besig gehou het.

Immelman, D. *Verhale uit Suidwes.* H.A.U.M.

Dit blyk duidelik uit die houding van die skrywer dat hy nie daarop uit was om kunsprosa te skryf nie; hy wou net 'n lekker verhaal vertel van dié soort wat transportryers vroër dae om die kampvuur vertel het. Die gevolg is dat sy verhale, hoewel tegnies vol gebreke, nogtans onderhoudend en boeiend is. Dit lyk of hy sy Suidwes wel deeglik ken.

Linde, F. *Swiera van die Waterkant.* H.A.U.M.

Hierdie aantreklike geillustreerde verhaaltjie oor 'n voëlgemeenskap is wel vir kinders geskryf, maar die taal en styl is van so 'n suwer gehalte dat ek spesiaal daarvan hier melding maak.

Marais, E. N. *Dwaalstories.* Human en Rousseau.

Hierdie Boesmanverhale van die gevierre skrywer was jarelank uit druk. Aangesien hulle ligwerp op die Boesmangedigte van die skrywer en seker van die beste Afrikaanse prosa is wat ooit geskryf is, meen ek dat die uitgewers alle Afrikaanse lesers se dank verdien vir hierdie smaakvolle herdruk.

Opperman, D. J. *Wiggelstok.* Nasionale boekhandel.

Die bekende Afrikaanse digter het sommige van sy opstelle oor letterkunde, veral poësie, byeengebring. Soos reeds elders deur 'n resensent opgemerk, skryf Opperman nie beredeneerde wetenskaplike kritiek nie, maar gee hy veel meer sy emosionele reaksie teenoor sekere aspekte van die poësie weer. Hierdie uitgangspunt verhoog m.i. die persoonlikheid en leesbaarheid van hierdie bundel.

Rousseau, L. *Die Florentyn.* Tafelberg-uitgewers.

Vir die leser wat nie baie gesteld is op swiwer taalgebruik nie, sal hierdie roman oor die lewe van die veelsydige Leonardo da Vinci seker interessante leesstof uitmaak. Ek vind dit egter uiters jammer dat daar juis in Afrikaans oor so 'n groot gees geskryf moet word in 'n taal wat wemel van holruggerige segswyses wat soms grens aan die banale. Ruimte laat my nie toe om voorbeelde aan te haal nie, maar op die eerste bladsy al word oom Francesco beskryf as „die swart skaap wat die vaandel van die Da Vinci's laat sak het”, en Leonardo self as die „produk van 'n onbesonne liefdesavontuur” van sy pa.

POLITIEK

Meyer, P. J. *Trek verder.* H.A.U.M.

Nadat die skrywer 'n kort oorsig gegee het van die vernaamste hedendaagse filosofiese rigtings wat almal humanisties van aard is, probeer hy die filosofie van die Afrikaner skets wat religieus van aard is en gee dan sy siening van die bestemming van die Afrikaner op die vasteland van Afrika.

Rabie, J. S. *Die evolusie van nasionalisme.*

Mishoring-pers.

Die skrywer het die ontwikkeling van nasionale state nagegaan. Hy gaan uit van die veronderstelling dat 'n federatiewe wêrldstaat onkeerbaar in aantog is en in dié staat sal nasies slegs as kulturele provinsies bestaan. In hierdie vermeende ontwikkeling meen hy 'n oplossing van Suid-Afrika se probleme te sien. Persoonlik het ek geen vertroue in toekomsprofete nie, maar nogtans is dit die moeite werd om met die skrywer se gedagtes kennis te maak. Dit kan uiteindelik slegs lei tot groter helderheid.

GODSDIENS

Boshoff, G. J. *U volk is my volk.* Voortrekkers.

In hierdie boek kom 'n aantal geleentheidspreke voor wat indertyd heelwat kommentaar uitgelok het onder andere ook van diegene wat hulle nooit gehoor het nie. Almal kry nou 'n kans om hulle te lees. Die preke is gelewer by geleentheid van verkiegings en by die dood van mnr. J. G. Strydom. Afgesien van die moontlik strydwekkende inhoud van sommige van sy preke, herinner die skrywer se styl en tegniek baie aan dié van die bekende Amerikaanse predikant, Peter Marshall.

Heyns, J. A. *Die onsterflikheid van die siel.*
N.G. kerk-uitgewers.

Na 'n beknopte oorsig van die teorieë van die vernaamste filosowe oor hierdie saak, gee die skrywer 'n uiteensetting van die standpunt van die N.G. kerk en die Bybelse gronde waarop dit berus.

Stellenbosch. Teologiese kweekskool: *Eeu-feesuitgawe van die Kweekskool, Stellenbosch, 1859—1959.*

So 'n eeufeespublikasie is altyd in later jare 'n uiters nuttige naslaanwerk. Dit sal ook die geval wees met hierdie een wat, afgesien van 'n oorsig van die geskiedenis en werksaamhede van die kweekskool, ook 'n baie waardevolle lys van persone gee wat hul studies daar voltooi het. Die lys gee volle voorname en geboortedatums.

LEWENS- EN
REISBESKRYWINGS**Cilliers, A. C.** *Die silwer soom.* Nasionale boekhandel.

Versamelaars van Africana en studente van die Suid-Afrikaanse politiek ken Prof. Cilliers as knap wetenskaplike met skerp politieke insig en belangstellings. In hierdie onderhoudende boek openbaar hy hom ook al geselsende as geesdriftige gholfspeler, hengelaar en bewonderaar van die skone geslag — kortom, as *bon vivant*. 'n Aangename boek om te lees.

Du Toit, J. S. *Die land van manana.* Balkema.

Die skrywer het 'n oog vir die skatte van die Spaanse beskawing wat hy hier so vol bewondering beskryf. Hy het ook waardering vir die gesonde lewenshouding van hierdie natuurlike mense wat hulle nie deur die gejaag van die twintigste eeu die kuns om te lewe en die lewe te geniet, laat vergeet het nie.

Hanekom, T. N. *Helperus Ritzema van Lier.*
N.G. kerk-uitgewers.

Hierdie vroeg-gestorwe predikant wat slegs sewe jaar aan die Kaap gewerk het en hier in 1793 oorlede en begrawe is in die ouderdom van 28 jaar, is een van die merkwaardigste figure in die Suid-Afrikaanse kerkgeskiedenis en hierdie goed-gedokumenteerde biografie oor hom, kan dus allesins verwelkom word.

Wiese, J. D. *37 jaar op die botterpad.* Afrikaanse pers.

Die skrywer was jarelank aan die suivelbedryf verbonde en het baie ondervinding van die dae toe die ko-operatiewe beweging in die vertakking van ons boerdery nog in sy kinderskoene gestaan het. Sommige van die petaljes wat hy vertel, is nogal vermaakklik.

GESKIEDENIS

VERTALINGS

De Wet, C. R. *Die stryd tussen Boer en Brit.* Tafelberg-uitgewers.

Hoewel die beroemde Genl. de Wet se boek oor die Anglo-Boereoorlog reeds in 1902 in Nederlands verskyn het en kort daarna beide in Engels en Duits vertaal is, verskyn dit nou vir die eerste keer in Afrikaans. Dit vul beslis 'n lank gevoelde leemte veral omdat die oorspronklike teks lank reeds uit druk is en slegs teen hoë koste en met veel moeite bekom kan word.

Pama, C. *Die wapens van die ou Afrikaanse families.* Balkema.

Met hierdie werk het die skrywer baanbrekerswerk verrig en hopelik heelwat helderheid gebring op 'n gebied waarop voorheen soveel onsekerheid en selfs verkullery voorgekom het. Dis jammer dat geeneen van sy talle plate in kleur gedruk is nie, maar dit sou natuurlik die koste oneconomies hoog laat styg het. Dit is 'n naslaanwerk wat elke biblioteek in ons land moet besit.

VOEDSEL

Schoonees, J. J. *Ons en ons voedsel.* Nasionale boekhandel.

In eenvoudige taal sodat beide die leek en die ouer kind dit kan verstaan, word die aard en funksies van verskillende soorte voedsel beskryf. Die boekie is 'n welkome toevoeging tot die populêr-wetenskaplike leesstof in Afrikaans.

Van der Merwe, A. *50 spyskaarte.* Nasionale boekhandel.

Hierdie boek verskil van die talle kookboeke in Afrikaans in dié opsig dat dit veral met die oog op die fynproewer opgestel is. Baie aandag word geskenk aan die dranksoorte wat pas by sekere kossoorte en die vrolike tekeninge in die boek dra baie daartoe by om 'n feestelike atmosfeer te skep.

De Vries, L. *Die atoom.* Nasionale boekhandel.

'n Populêre vertelling van die ontwikkeling van die kernfisika van die vroegste tye af tot op hede. Die boek is geskryf in die galopperende joernalistiese styl wat so eie is aan ons tyd en alhoewel 'n mens jou bedenks teenoor so 'n prosedure het wat soms die feite deur oorvereenvoudiging verkrag, moet die boek as enigste oor die onderwerp in Afrikaans nogtans verwelkom word.

Malherbe, M. *Skandinawiese legendes.* Universiteitsuitgewers, Stellenbosch.

Legendes sal seker nooit hul bekoring vir oud en jonk verloor nie. So sal menige leser ook dié versameling uit die ryke skat van die Noorse mitologie geniet. Die skryfster het die stories heeltemal verwerk en hulle so lewendig moontlik probeer weergee. Hierin word sy ondersteun deur die tekening van Joy Collier.

Shakespeare, W. *Hamlet, Prins van Dene-marke.* Tafelberg-uitgewers.

Hierdie tweede vertaling in Afrikaans van een van Shakespeare se mees populêre dramas is gemaak deur Senator D. P. de Klerk, vader van die bekende Afrikaanse skrywer W. A. de Klerk. Passasies wat ek hier en daar uit hierdie vertaling gelees het, klink aangenaam vlot en blykens sy aantekeninge aan die end van die boek, het die vertaler heelwat moeite gedoen om seker te maak dat sy vertolking juis sal wees.

Supervielle, J. *Die os en die esel van die krip.* Human en Rousseau.

Dit lyk of die vertaling van Elizabeth Eybers uitstekend daarin slaag om die direkte eenvoud en sobere skoonheid van hierdie Krismislegende deur die groot hedendaagse Franse skrywer te behou. Hierdie kort werkie word sterk aanbeveel by alle lezers van goeie prosa.

SOME RECENT SOUTH AFRICAN BOOKS IN ENGLISH

by

J. C. QUINTON

AGRICULTURE

Bentley, M. *Commercial hydroponics: facts and figures.* Bendon Books.

There may be reasonably well-educated people who have not heard of Hydroponics, or who, having heard of it, retain but the mistiest notion of what it is about. Such folk would no doubt be astonished if they were told that the beginnings of the science reach back a century, and that Mr. Bentley has already published two works on the subject, to which he has now added the above, containing 750 pages. The work is indeed a revelation, even to the enlightened, for the text is thoroughly documented and detailed. A special feature is the selection of plates, some in colour, illustrating lovely flowers and tempting-looking vegetables grown in vermiculite, gravel or kindred substances. We have the author's assurance that the whole business is not as simple as it may seem or as uninformed people may think.

BIOGRAPHY

Boydell, T. *My beloved country.* Nasionale Boekhandel.

This latest work by South Africa's well-known, unofficial, roving ambassador of goodwill, is largely a record of his trips abroad since he embarked on his mission some seven years ago. Mr. Boydell's style has all the punch and thrust that have distinguished him as a person all his life. His sentences flash like jack-knives along the pages; statistics rub noses with witticisms; crusty plain-talk jostles metaphor — all these devices combining to make his manner of writing highly individual. It may not be everybody's meat, or generally approved of, but few, surely, will deny the author's sincerity of purpose or fail to derive pleasure from reading him.

Bulpin, T. V. *Trail of the Copper King.* Timmins.

This well-known writer follows his usual predilection for dressing up historical fact in fictional garb and does so once again in an inimitable and readable way. The story concerns Orlando Baragwanath who set out as a boy to try his hand at prospecting, learned his trade from great prospectors in the wild days of early Johannesburg, suffered hardship and danger aplenty in Rhodesia, and lived to find with Frank Lewis the copper belt of Northern Rhodesia.

ETHNOLOGY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Gelfand, M. *Shona ritual: with special reference to the Chaminuka cult.* Juta.

It was while collecting material for a previous work, *Medicine and Magic of the Mashona*, that the author, a Salisbury physician, realized how much research remained to be done in the field of Shona studies. This work is a preliminary effort towards meeting the deficiency, the author having taken great pains in collecting and preparing his material. Apparently the Chaminuka cult is one of three variants in Shona ritual and religion, about which very little had hitherto been known or understood. Even so, much research still remains to be done, and, according to the author, should be done quickly, as the breakdown of tribal, clan and family unity is gradually spelling the doom of many of the traditional rituals. Several of the plates illustrate aspects of Shona custom and ritual.

Johnson, T., and others, compilers. *Rock-paintings of the South-West Cape.* Nasionale Boekhandel. (Text in English and Afrikaans.)

The foreword to this fascinating book, by the late Professor Goodwin of Cape Town University, summarizes the facts about the more important tribes (presumably Hottentots) to whom the paintings are ascribed. The reproductions cover the area

inhabited by the late stone-age tribes of the South-Western Cape, who used only such metal as they traded for meat with passing ships, preferring mostly stone implements and the same hunting weapons as the Bushmen. The work fills an important gap in the documentation of painting-sites in this area of the Cape. There are plates, some of them actual photographs, others reproductions from carefully and exactly traced originals re-imposed on good rock surfaces, as well as black and white illustrations in the text.

HISTORY: TRAVEL AND
DESCRIPTION

Barnett, P. *Sea safari with Professor Smith.*
The author.

An account, by a young advertising executive, of a marine research expedition under the leadership of South Africa's distinguished Ichthyologist, Professor J. L. B. Smith of Grahamstown. As a set of reminiscences and "on the spot" descriptions of a scientific excursion in collaboration with so remarkable a personality, the book can be judged a success, and worthy of its subject. The facts and observations are interesting, and the author has a sense of humour combined with a gift for pithy expression, though these virtues are slightly marred in places by the over-use of clichés. There are a number of rather good and interesting plates in addition to coloured vignette illustrations at the head of each chapter. The edition is limited to 250 copies.

Collier, Joy. *Stellenbosch revisited.* Stellenbosch University Booksellers and Publishers.

The author, who has written one other book, published in 1944 and entitled *Algerian Adventure*, is to be congratulated on a well-written book providing a wealth of historical information about Stellenbosch. Her sketches, particularly those of old Dutch buildings, are attractively done.

HOME ECONOMICS

Sieff, Pamela, *South African traditional dishes.* Timmins.

The fascinating subject of cookery has for some reason or other experienced a tremendous fillip in this country during recent years: possibly the beauty of modern kitchenware, the challenging efficiency of the modern-style kitchen, the greater general knowledge of dietetics and nutrition and increasing travel abroad have all played a part in this flowering of interest. Particularly noticeable is the renewed interest in South African cookery (the more truly indigenous as well as "acquired" dishes), which is surely to be welcomed and encouraged. This present addition promises to be a pretty comprehensive and useful addition to the growing list, and thank goodness, the instructions seem to be clear. Each section is prefaced by a black and white engraving.

LAW

Rosenthal, E. *Apology refused.* Timmins.

After the usual run of books on murder trials, it is somewhat of a relief to come across one dealing with an entirely different sort of trial. As the author states in his introduction: . . . "from time to time there are trials, no less exciting, though of a different kind, where human passions also show themselves, but where the crimes are not quite so grave. There are the libel actions, where spite, politics, jealousy and many other ingredients combine to form a situation fascinating to the public." A few of the more remarkable and interesting South African libel cases, involving such persons as General Louis Botha, Sir J. B. Robinson, Lord Kitchener and General Hertzog, are here related.

LITERATURE

Herbst, W. *From beacon to beacon.* Voor-trekkerpers.

This story of a young South African farm lad and his young native companions will sound a familiar echo in the hearts and memories of many an adult male reader who has roots in the platteland. For which of

these will not vividly recall the past, perhaps with a twinge of nostalgia, at mention of such words as Jantjie, kleibaas, big dam, cattie (catapult); or such activities as bird-shooting (and roasting) and mouse-hunting in the veld? It seems to be a valuable contribution to South African juvenile literature, written with a fair measure of sympathy and understanding.

Manson, H. W. D. *The Festival*. Balkema.

The author was born in Tanganyika and educated at St. Andrew's, Grahamstown, and the University of the Witwatersrand. Of the six full-length plays he has written, *The Festival* is the first to be published, while two of the others have been produced by amateurs, and extracts from three have been broadcast by the S.A.B.C. The events in these plays take place in remote countries and in the distant past, and they deal with Kings, Queens, Thanes and Dukes, though in point of fact their deeper purpose is to interpret contemporary human problems. This is a cleverly constructed comedy in which a number of themes are interwoven

and throughout which there is a subtle give and take between poignancy and gaiety.

RECREATION

Cattrick, A. *Spoor of blood*. Timmins.

Many books, good, bad and indifferent, in which are described the animals of Africa and how they are hunted, have appeared over a long stretch of years; yet more come rolling from the presses as if the subject had inexhaustible freshness and fascination. The work under review is of special merit. Not only are there most interesting character sketches of some of the more famous hunters and naturalists — men like Burchell, Harris, Cumming, Jacobs, Selous, Pretorius and Stevenson-Hamilton — but an unforgettable picture is painted of the vast herds of animals that once filled the African plains, of the unrelenting massacre that followed the arrival of the white man and his guns. Special mention must be made of the section dealing with the establishment of game reserves, in particular of the splendid work done by Stevenson-Hamilton for the Kruger National Park.

COUNCIL ON LIBRARY RESOURCES,
Inc.

One of the best things to have come from the United States in recent years, so far as library affairs are concerned, is the Council on Library Resources, Inc., established in 1956 at the instance of the Ford Foundation "to assist in the solution of library problems". The Council is an independent, non-profit, grant-making organization, and its President is the South African-born Verner W. Clapp, of Washington, D.C.

The third annual report of this Council, recently published, is in its turn one of the best-written and best-produced brochures we have come across for a very long time. It abjures all gobbledegook, and the lay-out and presentation are models of their kind. Among the 35 projects supported by the Council in 1958-59, involving grants and contracts totalling one and a quarter million dollars, were studies for the better use of library space, surveys of the extensive Fe-

deral system of libraries in the U.S.A., and a programme for the testing and standardization of library materials, while large grants were made towards the compilation of an up-to-date union catalogue of the periodical publications in libraries of the U.S. and Canada, a contract for the development of a mechanism for photographic storage of library material at a high ratio of reduction, and a grant to Library of Congress for the creation of a national union catalogue of manuscript collections.

Although all these projects confer benefits primarily on our colleagues of the New World, they are of indirect benefit to libraries in all parts of the world, and when the history of this library decade comes to be written, the work of this Council will be among the most worth-while activities to be recorded.

NEW ARCHIVES JOURNAL

In his account of the developments of the South African Archives since 1930, published in the new *South African Archives Journal/Suid-Afrikaanse Argiefblad*, Dr. P. J. Venter, formerly Assistant Chief Archivist, describes how he was sent to the Library of Parliament to learn the rudiments of librarianship under Mr. Paul Ribbink "and to be initiated into the mysteries of the Dewey system". While their techniques differ, there is in fact much in common between the work of the libraries and the archives in the Union, and this new journal, well printed and neatly designed, should prove of interest to many members of the library profession. Apart from Dr. Venter's very readable article (in English) there are contributions on the Natal Archives, the Cape Archive buildings, and the Union Archives depot, all in Afrikaans; Dr. Boëseken writes knowledgeably about "Theal as baanbreker", and there are articles by J. F. Pieller on "The Leibrandt appointment", and by A. M. Davey on the map collection in the Transvaal Archives. This is altogether a most informative number, and it is hoped that the editors will contrive to maintain the high standard they have set for its successors. Perhaps one may offer two small points of constructive criticism. It will add to convenience in handling and reference if future numbers carry a contents list and there is no indication in the first number of the periodicity of subsequent issues.

A STUDY OF DOCTORAL STUDIES

Among the research projects recorded in *Library research in progress* number two (January 1960) is one designed "to ascertain whether public library patrons borrow "good" books in a given subject field significantly more often than "not-so-good" books"; another for the compilation of pho-

to-copied historical manuscript materials in the U.S. and Canada; and a third, to make "a quantitative-qualitative historical review of doctoral study in librarianship in the U.S. from 1930 to date". The latter undertaking has been directed by J. Periam Danton, Dean of the School of Librarianship, University of California, Berkeley, in co-operation with the Association of American Library Schools, and the interested reader can learn much to his advantage by consulting the account of this work in *College and Research Libraries*, November, 1959.

CORRESPONDENCE

14, Oxford Circle,
Eureka Road,
Rondebosch, Cape.
24 February 1960.

The Hon. Editor,
SOUTH AFRICAN LIBRARIES.

Sir,

NATIONAL LIBRARIES

Mr. Friis, in his article in the January, 1960, issue of *South African Libraries*, casts doubt on there being any national library in the Union.

There are two national libraries, viz., the South African Public Library in Cape Town and the State Library in Pretoria. The national character of these libraries is clearly established by the Financial Relations Act (see the relative Schedule to the Act).

If Mr. Friis would like a more "authoritative" reading of the Act than my common-sense one, he should read the Auditor-General's opinion given in the early 1920's, in one of the Annual Reports — 1920-1 or 1921-22, I think.

I am, etc.,

M. M. STIRLING

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S. V. PETERSEN

Die drie boeke waarvoor aan mnr. Petersen in 1959 die Goue Medalje van die Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns toegeken is.

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